



Department of Justice

United States Attorney A. Brian Albritton
Middle District of Florida

Tampa
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
MONDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2009
<http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/flm/pr>

Orlando
Jacksonville
Ocala
Fort Myers
CONTACT: STEVE COLE
PHONE: (813) 274-6136
FAX: (813) 274-6300

COLOMBIAN FUGITIVE ARRESTED IN SPAIN ON FEDERAL DRUG TRAFFICKING CHARGES

Tampa, Florida - United States Attorney A. Brian Albritton announces the unsealing of an indictment charging Javier Fernando Saavedra-Escobar (age 46, of Cali, Colombia) in a four count Indictment. The charges allege the Saavedra-Escobar's participation in a conspiracy to transport kilogram-quantities of cocaine by sea, knowing and intending that the cocaine would be unlawfully imported into the United States. If convicted on any of the four counts, Saavedra-Escobar faces a mandatory minimum term of ten years in federal prison and up to life imprisonment.

Saavedra-Escobar was recently arrested in Madrid, Spain by the Spanish National Fugitive Squad on these charges pursuant to a provisional arrest warrant and a mutual legal assistance request from the Department of Justice. At the time of his arrest, Saavedra-Escobar was in possession of more than fifty grams of cocaine, as well as Venezuelan immigration documents. Several kilograms of cocaine were later found in his residence in Madrid. His extradition to the United States is pending.

According to the indictment, Saavedra-Escobar was the organizer of 1,000+ kilogram maritime cocaine shipments from the northern coast of Colombia to various

Central American countries. From at least 2002 through June 2007, Saavedra-Escobar organized the transportation of approximately nine tons of cocaine by sea.

An indictment is merely a formal charge that a defendant has committed a violation of the federal criminal laws, and every defendant is presumed innocent unless, and until, proven guilty.

This case is being investigated by OCDETF's Panama Express Strike Force, comprised of agents and analysts from the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Drug Enforcement Administration, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, United States Coast Guard Investigative Service, and Joint Interagency Task Force South. It will be prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Christopher F. Murray.
